

for use in Roman Catholic schools and colleges. It has two aims—"First, to give the student directly a certain amount of information and guidance regarding marriage and family life; second, to induce him to observe, to think ahead, to study further, and to plan regarding his own future marriage and family life" (page 3).

The method adopted by Father Schmiedeler is to expound in a popular way the encyclical of Pope Pius XI on "Christian Marriage." The language is lucid, the style good, and the book is attractively illustrated with photographs. The author clearly knows his subject, and, within the inevitable limits set by Roman Catholic doctrine, is sound and balanced in his conclusions.

Father Schmiedeler has something to say about eugenics. Referring to the venereal diseases, he says: "It should be the expected thing that a voluntary exchange of medical

certificates take place before marriage." Then he goes on—"Much the same rule applies with regard to mental disease—insanity, feeble-mindedness, and epilepsy. In varying degrees all these are inherited. It is not always possible to know in a specific case whether a disease or weakness is inherited or not. However, where cases are fairly common in a family, there is good reason to believe that it is a hereditary trait and carries with it the danger of transmission to offspring. An individual may well think seriously before marrying into such a family" (page 30).

This book should be found useful not only by Roman Catholics but also by non-Catholics who want a simple exposition of what might be called the liberal Catholic view of marriage and the family.

DAVID R. MACE.

OTHER NOTICES

Thomas, Harold. *People who live in glass houses as seen by a V.D. orderly.* London, 1945. Central Council for Health Education. Pp. 79. Price 9d.

IN a world overshadowed by the atomic bomb, total war, and mass starvation, obsession with venereal disease is surely a symptom of neurosis either in the individual or in society.

This pamphlet contains "horrible warning" stories as unusual as the appearance of a white blackbird. Given a reasonably hygienic standard of life the risks of infection run even by the licentious are small. The enormous increase in venereal disease during recent years has been due to war conditions combined with ignorance and the official policy of reducing decent accommodation for love-making to a minimum. The author underestimates the prophylactic efficiency of the condom and gives no instruction in its use. Antiseptic chemicals

and E.T. packets are deprecatingly referred to, but the reader is left in ignorance of the existence of calomel ointment and its use. In short, Mr. Thomas (or perhaps his publishers) are more interested in the preservation of chastity than the prevention of venereal disease.

The author has some interesting and intellectually honest things to say about treatment; and the pamphlet might with advantage be placed in the hands of everyone who has contracted venereal disease. For the more fortunate, however, the atmosphere of fear and pusillanimity created by officially sponsored propaganda is psychologically harmful both for the individual and for society at large. It is regrettable that tendentious half-truth of this nature should see the light when the honest work of Marie Stopes on the subject and the straightforward literature of the National Council for the Prevention of Venereal Disease is available.

ALEC CRAIG.